North Yorkshire County Council

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny

17 June 2019

Library Service - Year Two Update

1. Introduction

1.1 The report provides an update on the current situation two years after the library service reconfiguration in 2017, and is presented at the request of this committee following the 12 month project implementation review in June 2018. The 12 month review demonstrated that the programme objectives had been met, however members were keen to be updated as the new delivery model became more established.

1.2 At the meeting on 7 June 2018 Members noted:

- The recruitment of volunteers has been successful because communities want to retain their library service and are willing to volunteer for the benefit of the community. This loyalty to their community should continue to be respected by NYCC in the ongoing partnership arrangements.

- NYCC should continue to provide Stronger Communities and Library staff resources to provide support and encourage the expansion of services and community activities.

1.3 This report includes performance data from the library service and is informed by feedback from the community management groups, library staff, stronger community staff and customers.

1.4 The report also includes an overview of future plans with the development of a new Library Strategy document.

2. BACKGROUND

Library Service Re-configuration

2.1 The programme transitioned 33 council run libraries to varying levels of community responsibility on 1st April 2017 to achieve savings of £1.4m.

2.2 All libraries now require the support of volunteers to remain open and continue to deliver services. Core libraries have 60% paid and 40% volunteer staff, hybrid libraries have 40% paid and 60% volunteers. Community libraries have between 7 and 15 hours of paid staff time depending on business levels to support the volunteer groups deliver and develop their services.

2.3 NYCC provides equipment, books, software, public access PCs, network and Wi-Fi as well as professional staff time and delivery services to all libraries.   The RFID self-serve terminals, the PCs used by staff and volunteers, the public access PCs and copier/printers are all being renewed this year. The same criteria for replacement has been applied to all libraries.

2.4 Core libraries provide additional support for the community libraries as required and there is a telephone helpline for stock/IT support.

2.5 Community libraries have a lease or licence to operate depending on whether the property is an NYCC owned or leased building. The Community libraries have the responsibility for the buildings if leased and ownership stays with NYCC. In others, a licence to operate

retains the tenant as NYCC but gives the community library responsibility within the parameters agreed with the owner. In all cases this includes responsibility for operational costs such as utilities, rates and insurance. As those libraries in non-NYCC owned premises tended to have a higher costs, primarily due to rents payable, a subsidy was applied on the following basis *100% rent (where payable) + 70% utilities – income = subsidy*; the subsidy, although payable annually, is set at the 2016/17 budget figures.

2.6   A variation to the core/community library model is in Richmondshire where the library service work in partnership with a trust (CRACCL) to operate Richmond, Catterick and Colburn libraries as a single entity in terms of management, volunteers and paid staff in order to ensure that all 3 libraries maintain volunteer support and sustainability into the future.

2.7   There continues to be interest from other Local Authorities and Central Government as a model proven to retain service delivery – keeping libraries open - whilst delivering savings.

Library Strategy

2.8   The Library Service published a strategy document New Look, No Shush! 2008 – 2023. Since publication much has changed although this document still serves as a 'direction of travel' for the core library service. The changing use of libraries and the new model of delivery working in partnership with communities suggests it is time to re-visit this document and develop for the next ten years.

2.9   The Library Strategy is part of the council's policy framework. This means that the revised document needs to go to full council for approval.

3.   OVERVIEW

3.1   The 'new' model of service delivery, working in partnership with communities and volunteers has now been operational for two years – seven years for nine libraries. Members should be proud of their communities and library service for the managing to retain all libraries with the exception of Hunmanby which closed in 2012.

3.2   North Yorkshire is recognised as a low cost, relatively high performing authority in the latest CIPFA comparative report. The service has increased opening hours above 2012 levels and business levels are being maintained or declining at a lower rate than nationally. The number of visits per head of population is above the average when compared with nearest neighbour group, book issues above average nationally.

3.3   North Yorkshire did not face a legal challenge under the 1964 Public Libraries Act primarily as County still oversees the management of the service, provides the infrastructure (books, library management system and public IT) as well as paid staff support to ensure quality and consistency. In considering the future of its library services, the County Council must be mindful of its statutory duty under the Act and consider that the proposals will enable it to continue to run a comprehensive and efficient service which takes account of the needs of local communities, within the budget available.

4   UPDATE ON LESSONS LEARNED

Library Re-structure/Staffing

4.1   Library staff have adapted well to the new delivery model, and two years on are largely working alongside the community groups and volunteers for the benefit of library users. Community libraries know they can raise concerns and that these will be managed appropriately.   It has proved more challenging for staff at the core libraries with no tradition

of library volunteering; the sharing of planning, roles and tasks is one still developing to achieve its full potential.

4.2 There continues to be a high turnover of paid staff, currently standing at 6.5%, although considerably lower than the 30% following the re-structure it is still twice the previous annual average of 3.3%. The previous year saw many new appointments creating a younger staff profile, it is possible that the service now reflects the national trend of jobs no longer being seen as 'for life'; equally partnership working can be more challenging than some expect.

NYCC Support (non-library)

4.3 The Stronger Community Delivery Managers continue to work closely with both groups and library staff to support volunteers to ensure sustainability and encourage development of both the local offer and individual skills. Feedback from groups is that this support is welcomed and highly regarded, ranging from assistance in the recruitment of volunteers, support in funding bids or writing business plans. The level of input varies depending on the skills of the management group, the majority of groups take full advantage with a small number relying on this support whilst some seek little or no assistance.

4.4 Feedback indicates there are still some general concerns around communication and support around property and IT. Whilst in part there is an expectation of an immediate resolution, the lack of dedicated corporate resources to support volunteer groups will remain an issue for some time to come, however as it is unrealistic to have resources purely to manage issues that may arise, it is essential that all involved are kept fully informed when they do. All issues raised have and are being addressed, however it is acknowledged that communication has not always been as good as it could have been.

4.5 The library service has developed a triage system in partnership with Technology and Change for managing IT issues which has improved the speed of response and resolution. The provision of new PCs (both 'staff' and public) should address issues, including potentially 'network' speed. However legislative requirements such as GDPR and ensuring network security will continue to be an 'issue' for some community libraries as long as they remain part of the NY library network and to operate fully independently would severely limit the service they could offer.

4.6 Property issues – repairs and maintenance – remain a concern, particularly of those groups co-located alongside NYCC services. It is essential that all areas of the council are open and honest in communications with groups, for example a contractor visiting the site to assess a job does not mean that the work will be undertaken in the immediate future.

4.7 The majority of property issues relating to leases have been sorted, those outstanding are primarily relate to non-NYCC owned buildings. These are known and Property are addressing.

Volunteer Recruitment

4.8 Overall volunteer recruitment continues to be successful, with most reporting a very low turnover rate. There remains a concern for our community libraries aligned to the future sustainability rather than the present day. The majority of community libraries have well established regular volunteers able to provide a range of activities alongside the core book lending function. There is a greater concern at the Core libraries, many of which are struggling to recruit. Stronger Communities and the library service, plus NY Resourcing Solutions and Communications sections are supporting campaigns to improve this situation alongside continued support for the community libraries.

4.9 Recruitment of volunteers with particular skills, eg fundraising and IT or for specific times, eg Saturdays and evenings remains a concern across almost all libraries and targeted campaigns are being developed for all libraries.

Training

4.10 The programme is under constant review and has been amended several times, this will continue whilst retaining the remit to cover essential service requirements. Volunteer training continues to be a 'difficult' issue. Whilst all groups recognise the need, there are varied opinions on how best to deliver and some reticence on the part of some groups to encourage their volunteers to undertake the full induction as another demand on volunteer's time. This is less prevalent where management groups have experience of other volunteer organisations such as CAB or the National Trust. The service remains in discussion with groups to work solutions to meet local needs whilst ensuring consistency for what is a county-wide service.   An unexpected benefit has been the increased take-up of our online resources as the training include hands-on sessions doing more to increase awareness of practical use which in turn has then been promoted by our volunteers.

4.11 Feedback indicates that the revised volunteer online required training courses are much improved and the majority of volunteers are now undertaking these. Volunteer focus groups assisted with the revision of these courses and will continue to be involved with any future changes. Where necessary library staff have supported group sessions to improve take-up. These courses are now directly accessible online removing the issues around registration however this does mean that the library service is unable to monitor take-up and relies on volunteers reporting to management groups who then report to the service. Similarly the automatic creation of certificates for completion are no longer available. Feedback from groups is that these would be appreciated by all volunteers, especially those who are using volunteering as a first step towards employment. The corporate volunteering group is working with Training and Learning to resolve these issues.

5   PREFORMANCE

Financial

5.1 As reported in June 2018, the library service achieved the required £1.4million savings. The out-turn for 2018/19 resulted in an underspend of £82k, primarily due to temporary staff vacancies. This will be used to support the replacement of the public access computers.

Business levels

5.2 The most recent CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) rated the service as a relatively high performing low cost authority. The following paragraphs look at performance against 2017/18 across the branch libraries.

Visits

5.3 Nationally physical visits to libraries are decreasing in relation to the size of the population. In 2018-19 this trend was halted in North Yorkshire with an increase of 1.6% over the previous year.

Total Visits	**2,117,881 (+1.6%)**
Core	759,337 (-1.4%)
Hybrid	451,602 (+1.9%)
Community Libraries	900,781 (+0.2%)

5.4 There is no obvious pattern to the increase/decrease indicating that this is a local issue requiring local solutions.   Of those increasing by more than 10%, two are Core, eight are

Community managed libraries. Those decreasing by more than 10% - five are community managed and one Core library. The clearest link to increased issues is at those libraries offering a wide range of activities beyond those traditionally seen as a library function such as IT support, information drop-ins, and other community based services.

5.5   Grassington showed the greatest increase at 71%, showing the benefit of excellent leadership for the volunteers as well as providing other community based services such as tourist information and box office for local events. Grassington have also translated their increased visitors to increased library membership and book borrowing. It is in recognition of their outstanding and improved performance Grassington have been selected as North Yorkshire's Library of the Year Award 2018/19.

Virtual Visits - 429,691 (+69%)

5.6   Virtual visits are increasing, particularly with regard to borrowing of e-books and other online resources, anecdotally higher than average. This in part reflects the investment made by North Yorkshire, but also potentially the geography and demographic of users. It is also likely that part of this increase is due to volunteer training increasing awareness.

Issues

5.7   The level of physical book lending is likely to continue to decline but the reduction is beginning to slow in North Yorkshire; the demand for e-resources continues to increase but at a slower rate.

Total Issues	**2,145,589 (-2%)**	
Core	799,040 (-3.8%)	NB Selby closed for 6 weeks
Hybrid	397,648 (-6.2%)	NB Filey closed for 6 weeks
Community Libraries	782,400 (-0.5%)	

5.8   The most notable factor here is that the book issues appear to be holding steady at community libraries, possibly reflecting the continued support and need for the local library within the community.

5.9   An area of concern is that of the comparatively low children's issues, whilst specific projects have had an impact, such as the Summer Reading Challenge, these tend to be time limited and not necessarily continued, in part as children grow up and move to new interests. Addressing the geography and access is a more complex issue but one that does need attention as this is not county-wide but tends to reflect where good partnerships/working relationships exist, Harrogate has high children's use, and Scarborough is low. Harrogate has become 'the place' for pre-exam study and with our young volunteers investigating how to replicate this elsewhere. Gargrave and Mashamshire have both increased issues by more than 10% - both have developed good relationships with their local primary schools.

E-issues - 123,776 (+18%)

5.10   E-book issues continue to increase albeit at a slower rate than previous, however still above the national average, reflecting both the investment and geography of the county.

Active users total 84,252 (-23%)

5.11   Active users have borrowed an item or used a PC within the last 12 months.

Core	37,050 (-25%)
Hybrid	16,575 (-20%)
Community Libraries	33,694 (-15%)

Active Borrowers total 66,260 (-4%)

5.12   Active borrowers have only borrowed an item within the last 12 months.

Core   26,418 (-4.5%)
Hybrid   12,502 (-4.1%)
Community Libraries   26,570 (-3.1%)

5.13   Mashamshire and Leyburn have both increased by over 10%; with one Hybrid and four Community Libraries falling by more than 10%. Interestingly, the average customer is still borrowing circa 30 items per year, at an average of one item per visit.

IT hours used total 188,969 (-2.5%)

Core   93,360 (-2.1%)
Hybrid   34,161 (+0.2%)
Community Libraries   188,969 (-2.5%)

5.14   Use of the library public access PCs has declined in recent years, in part following the introduction of wi-fi allowing use of own devices and in part due to the outdated equipment. The equipment is being replaced this year, with appropriate reductions to reflect this decline, retaining numbers to allow continued use as training suites.

5.15   However this downward trend appears to be slowing possibly as more services become accessible only on-line as evidenced by that increase in assistance given to users. In 2018/19 20,552 people were directly supported to access services on-line using by library staff and volunteers.   Notably this includes the Blue Badge and bus pass applications, but also general access to services such as utility companies, driving licence renewal etc.

Assisted digital sessions 20,555 (+15%)

Core   11,391
Hybrid   3,206
Community Libraries   5,955

Library Activities

5.16   All libraries have continued to deliver traditional library loan services and have continued with established activities, including the summer reading challenge for children. 2018 saw 9,650 children take part. External funding has enabled the delivery of several larger projects all of which our volunteers have supported and assisted with. These include Encounters: Cook 250 at Whitby, E-Code at Scarborough and Fun Palaces held across libraries in Ryedale.

5.17   We also have several award-winning community libraries. Newby and Scalby Community Library were voted a winner in the National Lottery People's Projects. Their prize is the £18,900 to transform land behind the library into a community garden with access for all.   The 3-D Printing Club held at The Globe @ Stokesley won the international "Meet and Code" Award and were the only UK group to reach the finals.

5.18   Bedale Community Library has been honoured with the Community Award that is presented annually by Bedale Town Council. Grassington Hub have won a Duke of York's Community Initiative Award

5.19   An increasing number of the community libraries are expanding their offer with ambitions to expand as a community hub for areas such as children and young people, tourist information, arts and culture and joint services with other community and voluntary groups.

This has been and will continue to be supported by the Stronger Community and library teams. The library service is in discussions with Arts Council England working on a bid to increase volunteer capacity to deliver creative activities.

5.20 We are aware that the reporting of activities and events is not always undertaken and are working with community libraries to improve this so that all the volunteer effort is recognised as well as evidencing the varied use made of the library premises. This data should be submitted through the library supervisor where possible to avoid unnecessary additional workload for volunteers, similarly it would be good to capture data on all community activities within the building however we accept that this may be asking too much.

Recorded activities	5,671
Core	2,467
Hybrid	1,768
Community Libraries	1,436

6.0 FEEDBACK

6.1 All Hybrid and Community groups were asked to feedback on the last year in terms of what had gone well, badly and what could be improved. This has been further informed by feedback from the regular 1-1s and annual review meetings. There are themes common to all primarily around sustainability and succession planning.

6.2 In terms of going well the majority are pleased that they have the ongoing front-line and professional librarian support although there have been issues around cover for long-term absence (now resolved) and one group wanting to be fully independent of NYCC.

6.3 Communication remains a concern, although there is acknowledgement that this has improved. The service has introduced a protocol to cover frequency and language used when sending e-mails. This includes advising staff on when they need to follow up on at meetings with management groups and volunteers and which require immediate action. Whilst this is not always possible every effort is being made to avoid email overload for the volunteers. Issues around premises support and IT have been already been addressed in paragraphs 4.4 - 4.7 above.

6.4 Recruitment trustees/management group are cited as areas of concern, succession planning is an issue particularly for the first tranche in 2012. Most state they have sufficient volunteers to operate the core service and now recognise the need to recruit volunteers with specific skills to expand services such as assisted digital. However, all have concerns around sustainability of the model as the demand for volunteers for other services and organisations increases, plus people now staying in paid employment longer so less time for volunteering.

6.5 Most groups indicate a willingness to be more involved with creation of policies and development, some noting appreciation of involvement with the design/specification of both the self-serve and public access PC replacement programme.

6.6 It is always interesting as to why people volunteer and the following feedback are just two examples:

"I volunteered to help keep the library running. What I had not expected was how much I enjoy working with the staff and meeting library users. Really good fun."

"I had serious medical problems in 2015, and taking part in volunteering activities – especially the community library from April 2017 – helped me to rebuild my confidence and get a sense of direction."

Community Libraries

6.7   All feel more confident in service delivery and many are now looking to expand services and are working with the Stronger Communities team to develop business plans. However there are some who simply want to keep the library open and deliver the core service.

6.8   All are pleased the self-serve and public access devices are being upgraded, however there have been some issues where numbers of PCs are to be reduced. Several commented they were pleased to have been involved in the design and specification discussions. Concerns around network speed when printing remain and are being monitored. Most welcome that the new self-serve will have a range of payment options including contactless – this comes with a friendly warning as 'long as we still get the money'. Many state that their customers remain grateful for their work in keeping libraries open.

6.9   CRACCL (operating Richmond, Catterick and Colburn libraries as a single entity) report that all three libraries are working well however the Trustees are finding it a greater workload than expected co-ordinating and overseeing three very different libraries.

6.10   Several groups gave feedback on specific issues which are being or have been addressed by the service. Some of these relate to policies and the wish to have local variances. For example service fees and charges such as fines and reservations. In addition, several mentioned that the networking meetings were useful, with mixed thoughts on the involvement of library staff and Stronger Community involvement, the greater number pleased that Stronger Communities and Library staff do attend. At least two had immediate concerns around financial sustainability and stated that the premises subsidy was essential, this is discussed in more detail in paragraphs 7.14 – 7.16 below.

Hybrid Libraries

6.11   There is a general feeling from the committees at Hybrid libraries that volunteers are growing more confident and wishing to expand what the group offers. Establishing a Hybrid specific network is requested – this is being addressed.

Customer feedback

6.12   The majority of customer feedback received by the service relates to specific issues and/or policies and the service responds to these, if a complaint related to a community library the response would be agreed with that library. 2018/19 saw the service as a whole receive 11 compliments, 17 complaints, and 6 suggestions. Library overdue fines continue to be the main subject of both complaints and suggestions.

6.13   Community and Hybrid Libraries both report that they still receive customer thanks for their efforts in keeping libraries open. One of reported that new customers did not always realise the library was community managed by volunteers which I would take as a compliment on how professional and competent our volunteers are.

Staff feedback

6.14   Staff working directly with community libraries state that they are impressed with the ability and enthusiasm of volunteers. That in many cases the library is able to offer a wider range of activities than would otherwise be possible due to numbers and skills of volunteers available.

6.15   Staff also report that there are benefits to having a nominated volunteer co-ordinator who is also a regular front-line volunteer as this benefits both the management of the library and

customers being able to introduce prospective volunteers directly to an individual who understands the role and needs of the service.

6.16   Those working alongside locally employed staff as at Stokesley and Great Ayton say it has also helped "to mark a distinction between Manager and Supervisor roles, with myself as supervisor being able to get on with HLIS and stock jobs and able to assist 'front desk' volunteers".

6.17   Others say that being very mindful that to say a service is 'Volunteer delivered' – then it has to be as far as possible. The majority have come to realise that they are truly "'enablers,' teaching, coaching and showing the volunteers as much as we can accepting that things may not always go perfectly, but can usually be laughed about and sorted".

7   NYCC ASSESSMENT

Governance

7.1   All libraries remain part of the North Yorkshire 'family of libraries' using a single management system for stock management, the same public IT provision ensuring a consistent offer across the authority. The day-to-day operations are managed according to the category of library – Core, Hybrid and Community. NYCC staff continue to manage delivery at the Core and Hybrid libraries and supporting delivery at Community libraries. As expected with 31 different communities there is a range of styles across the 31 Community libraries. The majority do have formal management committees some with highly organised sub-groups e.g. Stokesley, Bedale, Norton and Sherburn. Those co-located with other community organisations, are 'managed' by staff from that organisation e.g. Nidderdale Plus (Pateley Bridge) and Masham. A small number, all co-located, do not have a formal management group with volunteers recruited by the 'host' organisation e.g. Bentham and Leyburn.

7.2   A small number of community libraries have employed additional paid staff to support the library; Eastfield and Great Ayton have commissioned posts through the library service; Great Ayton, Stokesley and Tadcaster have employed staff to act as centre manager and/or administration posts through town/parish councils. We are currently in discussion with several libraries about these additional posts. Both library staff and management committees report that having this additional paid staffing has created the opportunity to have a more structured management model and better co-ordination of both volunteers and activity programming.

7.3   Many of the community libraries use an electronic rota, accessible from home, which volunteers use to sign up for sessions. This has proved both popular and successful with both management committees and volunteers, however this can be an area of concern for library staff if volunteers leave it late to sign up creating an element of worry over whether the library can open. Others have rotas that remain largely static with volunteers doing a regular time-slot on a weekly or fortnightly basis.   It should be noted that closure due to lack of volunteers has been minimal.

7.4   It must be accepted that there is no single 'right way', all libraries remain open and used. However if we are to encourage development beyond the core library functions all should be supported and encouraged to develop structured groups to avoid reliance on a small group of individuals.

Volunteers

7.5   The reliance on volunteers to maintain service provision is evidenced with the 51% 'worked hours' compared to the national average of 7%, and has led to no closures since 2012

against the national average (2017/18) of 0.4 per 100,000 population (equivalent 2.5 for North Yorkshire).

7.6   The number of hours given by volunteers remains steady; 2018/19 saw a total of 158,196 hours 1.5% up on 2017/18.   The number of individuals now stands at 2,143 with 350 new volunteers recruited this year, an overall increase of 10% on last year.

7.7   Whilst priority remains supporting management groups and volunteers at community libraries, it is good to see the increasing confidence of volunteers at the Core and Hybrid libraries. Volunteers at Whitby Library have been involved in both the Encounters: Cook 250 and Fish and Ships festivals; whilst a volunteer team at Harrogate supported the first ever Library Digital Makey Day in North Yorkshire and attended the Staff Awayday to demonstrate coding.

7.8   Volunteer recruitment and succession planning remain of greatest concern at all libraries. Two years in and it is recognised at all libraries that the need is to target recruitment to specific skills and availability rather than blanket recruitment.   Most of the community management groups continue to have concerns over succession planning, finding volunteers willing to be trustees or similar proving a challenge.

7.9   Training continues to be a sensitive issue.   The on-line training courses have been revised to reflect the volunteer aspect and be more accessible via a direct web link. Whilst this has improved access and relevancy so that most volunteers are now undertaking this training as routine, it does not provide a certificate for completion or allow monitoring.

Library Staff

7.10   The role of the paid staff support at the branches is to assist, support and advise on activities and tasks that can be undertaken to improve performance. The level of performance can be reflective of that relationship, with some community groups seemingly more reluctant to try new ideas, or seeing some activity as non-library. Those that are maintaining or improving are those who have increased opening hours, provided a range of events and activities, and i.e. been pro-active within their community. The library and stronger community teams continue to support and develop groups where skills, confidence and capacity seem lower than elsewhere.

7.11   The library support staff for community libraries forms 8% of total staffing (5.5FTE); overseeing use of 48% of council investment of resources (books, software, and delivery services and 58% of ICT resources (public access PCs, network including Wi-Fi).   In real terms supporting volunteers to deliver services using resources funded by the council to circa £650,000.

7.12   Since April 2017, frontline staff based in community libraries have delivered 228 formal training sessions to 718 volunteers, these cover use of the library management system, Summer Reading Challenge, council services (assisted digital) as well as fire safety, safeguarding and equalities. In addition a series of seminars workshops covering stock management, publicity and event organisation have been well attended with further planned.

7.13   A third Stakeholder conference is to be held in November this year with the agenda directed by the community groups and volunteers.

Finance

7.14   The current situation is that the majority of community libraries remain financially viable, many are proficient fundraisers, although all express concerns about the future. Some, eg

Stokesley have developed a business sponsorship scheme, others, including Crosshills, Norton and Bedale have Friends subscriptions. Tadcaster offer a costume rental service. Those libraries co-located with external organisations are more openly concerned about financial sustainability.

7.15   There is service-wide concern that the income generated from fines and other library charges is declining – by over 50% in some cases. The actual cause is not known as unpaid fines have also fallen so the assumption is that customers are more adept at returning or renewing to avoid any payments.

7.16   There is a wide range of premises costs/rents dependent on arrangements made NYCC, with communities with libraries in rented accommodation at a disadvantage in comparison without some additional financial support to cover rents which ranged from £1,000 (Boroughbridge), £10,000 (Bedale) to £24,000 (Thirsk and Catterick). The Executive approved this using the formula:

100% rent + 70% utilities – income = subsidy using 2016/17 actual costs. No time limit was set however it was agreed these would not be re-assessed except in extra-ordinary circumstances. Many of these groups raised this as a concern in 2016 and it remains a concern.

8   FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Overview

8.1   As stated in paragraph 6, many of the community libraries are looking to develop services and facilities beyond the core library offer. Indeed many have already done so in terms of using the library as a social space - especially when fund-raising. Bedale hosts regular events including *Beer, Romans and Sausages*! Others, such as Stokesley – The Globe, have a 3D printing club, as well as a wide range of community activities. Norton HIVE also offer an ever expanding list of events and activities and are working in partnership with Adult Learning Services to provide increased learning opportunities.

8.2   A number of community libraries are actively developing their place as a community hub, offering a range of services. Whilst not all can emulate that delivered by Hawes most are seeking to expand their offer and are being supported by Stronger Communities to develop business plans and funding bids.

8.3   The established community library networks have proven a good method of sharing best practice as well as sharing concerns and shared solving of problems. Both Stronger Communities and Libraries will continue to support these networks and look to further developing as a more formal consultation forum on service issues.

Library Strategy

8.4   As stated in paragraph 2.8 the service is intending to publish a new strategy – working title *Your Library Your Space.* The strategy will describe some of what our libraries do now and set the vision and ambition for the next 10 years.

8.5   National policy on public libraries is responsibility of DCMS, the current Task Force is due to report later this year, and has been providing support, guidance and advise on expectations for the last three years. North Yorkshire has provided information and case studies to inform the work of the Task Force and has been featured as an example of best practice for work with volunteers in several interim reports. Various specific events and activities have also been featured on the Task Force blog providing a national and international audience for us.

8.6   The Strategy will look at the four main objectives expected of public library services, all of which align well with NYCC priorities:

- Literacy and Learning
- Health and Well-being
- Digital
- Communities

8.7   Each section will include a description of current activity, including examples from all our libraries, future ambitions and outcomes, and actions required to achieve these.

8.8   It is intended to develop a draft document with Community Libraries and other volunteers invited to feed into the development through focus groups held across the county over the coming months.   We would also be looking for a general consultation in the autumn before the document finalised and submitted for approval at Full Council in November.

9   CONCLUSIONS

9.1   All 42 libraries operating in 2016 remain open with sustainable business levels.

9.2   There has been no Central Government challenge

9.3   Current feedback indicates an increase in confidence and skills and an appetite to expand activities and develop the community offer.

9.4   There remain a number of practical issues regarding volunteer training, ICT, and lease agreements. Work is ongoing to resolve any remaining issues.

9.5   The recruitment of volunteers continues to be successful because communities want to retain their library service and are willing to volunteer for the benefit of the community. This loyalty to their community should continue to be respected by NYCC in the ongoing partnership arrangements.

9.6   The new model of delivery and changing use of libraries required the development of a new library strategy.

9.10   If NYCC is to encourage the development and expansion of the services and community activities it will need to:

- Continue to provide Stronger Communities and Library staff resources and infrastructure, including support for network meetings
- Recognise the capacity of volunteers to both deliver services on behalf of the council and the need to fund raise to be able to do so

10   RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1   The Committee are asked to:
   i)   Note the report
   ii)   Note the intention to develop a Library Strategy covering the next 10 years.
   iii) Endorse the conclusions listed above

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Libraries General Manager
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5 June 2019